



AOC On Balance

From the Director



Marla S. Moore

The past three months have passed quickly and the AOC has been hard at work with a variety of projects we are excited to report to you.

The agency-wide scanning effort that began earlier this year has paid off immeasurably. So many files have been digitized that

20 filing cabinets were put into surplus. Herschel Jones Middle School in Dallas, GA, was the recipient of the many three-ring binders that were left without anything to bind during the scanning process.

In this issue, the AOC Department Spotlight is focused on our IT Division.

Our staff is gearing up for the upcoming legislative session. The Board of Court Reporting recently held three Town Hall meetings and is busy planning more. On top of their regular duties, AOC staff participated in a Work Study for two weeks to better understand the questions put to our office on a day-to-day basis. In the near future, several of our publications — *Georgia Courts Journal* and *On Balance* — will be available in digital web-site versions.

The dust has settled from our “great migration” and what once was a cluttered mess is now wide open and easily navigable. A newly constructed door directs the flow of traffic straight through one building to the next without the inconvenience of wandering through a maze in search of the agency training room or an exit. Cubicles were dismantled/reconfigured while bookcases and unused countertops were removed. Surplus computers were donated to Computers for Youth-Atlanta, a group that supplies 6th graders with home computers stocked with educational games and software.

AOC Chief Information Officer on National Technology Panel

Jorge Basto, AOC CIO, didn't just go to the 2011 Court Technology Conference for the swag at the vendor tables. As a board member of the Court IT Officers Consortium (CITOC), he was put to work moderating the panel *Great Expectations:*



Manage Them Before They Manage You on Tuesday, October 4, 2011.

The 4:00 p.m. session was well-attended as Basto guided Court Technology Officers Jennetta Vinoy, Napa County (CA) Superior Courts, Heather Pettit,



Jorge Basto

Sacramento (CA) Superior Court, and Joe Mannion, Alaska Court System, through the free-flowing, conversational panel which included topics like “Getting Buy-In from the Bench”, motivating employees, and the appropriate tools and processes to use for effective project management.

“The CIO/CTO position is intended to be a forward thinking, strategic and visionary role,” Basto said, “but the reality is that there is constant pressure to juggle new projects with current infrastructure needs which forces Project Management methodologies to be implemented.”

The consensus of the panel was that with good buy-in from the appropriate leadership, marketing and support becomes much more viable. “Buy-in” from the staff is essential as well. Managing, encouraging, and motivating staff is imperative, the panel concluded, to retain good employees despite a competitive private sector.

Read more on CTC2011 on page 2.

CTC 2011: Recharging Court Technology on a Shoestring Budget

Submitted by Michael Neuren



Michael Neuren

The month of October brought around the biennial Court Technology Conference or CTC 2011, presented by the National Center for State Courts. Before you go thinking that this was just another West Coast junket for a few members of the IT staff, you should think of it as a recharge to invigorate our folks and an opportunity to see how Georgia compares with other states' judicial systems. While conferences and conventions may mean fun and frolic for some, these events were chock full of important activities and education ... they were also huge business and marketing opportunities.

The Court Information Technology Officer Consortium (CITOC) created an entire track of sessions for court CIO's that addresses the entire life-cycle of court IT management. There were many sessions sharing innovations in court automation, how courts have transitioned to new technology, and re-engineered processes and their organization to take advantage of the new electronic world. Additionally, many sessions focused on looking toward the future with next-generation technology standards, new information sharing approaches, and the application of new technologies in the courtroom. Also CTC has the largest court technology vendor show in the world with all the latest systems and ideas.

Keynotes

On Tuesday (October 4), the keynote speaker was New York *Times* technology columnist David Pogue who demonstrated the latest consumer technologies and discussed how they will change — and have already changed — our culture. Pogue spoke of cultural shifts resulting from technology in terms of app/smart phones, web2.0. and the huge generational changes we see now.

On Wednesday, (October 5) Miami-Dade County Judge Steven Leifman told the personal and

compelling story of his effort to reform his court's revolving-door administration of justice by partnering on change with prisons, mental health service providers, courts, prosecuting attorneys, and ultimately the state legislature. Judge Leifman's concern that he was unable to really do anything for the mentally ill in his court drove him to find a solution to this national problem. He described cases involving the mentally ill charged with crimes who could be sentenced to jail but could not be involuntarily hospitalized by the court. He used technology to gather data and to create diversion programs in partnership with other entities affected.



The Cloud and E-Everything

New Horizons: Cloud Computing defined “the cloud” and discussed the benefits and risks of cloud computing. There is no way to avoid the cloud as it is the “new normal.” The benefits include utilizing a highly effective tool that does not require excessive amounts of one's budget. Some considerations that must be made before going to the cloud are performance, safety, and access. Timely access, response time, and pricing all have an effect on performance. Safety concerns are loss of data and backup abilities, corruption and hacking, location of the data (i.e., are there laws that require it be in the state or country?), and access to data when a contract ends. Some of the questions they posed include:

Will the provider expect to share the data?

Who controls the discarded data?

Could third party management of data lead to the data being subpoenaed?

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Iveta Toplova, Architect, Microsoft and a member of the IJIS Institute Technical Advisory Committee, stressed that standards for the cloud are critical for security, portability, and interoperability.

With the cloud, IT staff can shift focus from physical maintenance to business services. In the program, *Transitioning from an IT Shop to a Technology Services Shop*, the panel spoke of the trials and tribulations of the IT department. They spoke of the problem of being considered the place for the answers on the workings of anything with a cord or wire. The importance of establishing policies and procedures to define the scope of IT was stressed. They discussed strategic planning, core competencies, quality, and customer service.

In *E-Everything: The Future of Court Business and Management*, Tom Clarke of NCSC presented his vision of the future and two directors of court administration offices, Artie Pepin of New Mexico and Donald Goodnow of New Hampshire, commented in a panel discussion. Fewer staff with a higher skill level will be required as routine tasks become automated. They spoke of concerns for self represented litigants, outsourcing, remote workers in the courts, and judges specializing on certain types of cases. On concern that was voiced is that accessing the courts online involves removing personal contact and the impression of the court as trusted institution.

On the last day of the conference, the program, *Court Technology on a Tight Budget*, was held in the Center for Legal Court Technology (CLCT), formerly Courtroom 21, courtroom. A technologically equipped courtroom was on the stage while Martin E. Gruen, Deputy Director of CLCT, provided advice on meeting the constant demand for new technology on a limited budget.

At the CTC 2011 Expo, there were vendors for case management, e-filing, jury summons mailing,

systems for delivery of court video and audio recordings, e-signing, court blogging, and courtroom security.

The Effect New Technology Will Have on Old Jobs

Overall, the programs had a common thread. The same question was asked: What effect will the introduction of new technology have on existing court departments? What will happen to employees in the clerk's office when there is no more paper to process? What will IT do when everything moves to the

cloud? E-filing will not eliminate the need for the clerk's office or the move to the cloud will not eliminate the need for IT. The function of the clerk's office and IT are not changing but the *how* and *what* of those departments is. Clerks will still manage filing but through an e-filing system. One speaker suggested that the clerk of the future may require more

skills than before. The programs on the cloud and IT suggested that IT would have fewer physical "boxes" to maintain and would be able to concentrate on service. Using technology to reduce costs through e-filing and case management may be the key in the ability of courts to do more with less as the current state of the economy is insisting.

The Court Technology Conference (CTC), established in 1984 and sponsored by the National Center for State Courts, is the largest conference dedicated to court technology in the world. Every other year, CTC brings together more than 1,500 court professionals — judges, court administrators, court managers, technologists, and others — for three days of professional development, educational programs, and networking.

Attending the Court Technology Conference is recommended to all those involved in the workings of the courts and learning more about court functions. CTC2013 will be held in Baltimore, September 17 – 19, and Georgia should be well represented there by a great delegation.



AOC Department Spotlight:

Information Technology Division

The Information Technology Division maintains the internal network of the AOC, the judicial branch personnel database, and external and internal websites. They also manage desktop software and equipment, e-mail, and listserv capabilities. The staff consults, develops, and supports court automation projects such as: the Child Support E-filing System, the AOC Judicial Information and Data Portal, local case management and docketing systems for 274 Georgia courts, and EXPRESS for e-citation solutions. The Division also has staff actively participating in local and national groups such as Oasis, CITOC, and Legal XML to define, design, and promote judicial technology standards.

Jorge Basto

Chief Information Officer



Job Function: I manage the Information Technology Division and balance the workloads amongst available resources. I evaluate project and enhancement requests made of IT as well as attempt to define and maintain an overall strategic direction. My

day mostly consists of portfolio/project management

Most Valuable Job Skill: Communication with customers and staff as well as being able to understand the impact of IT on the business processes.

Favorite Hobby: Sports – I spend most of my free time with my daughters on the soccer fields, and I personally play baseball and soccer on a regular basis.

If you could meet one person, who would it be and why? The late Steve Jobs – I think we all have visions of what “could be,” and I would love to talk to him about how you maintain the momentum and enthusiasm for creating solutions.

Byron Branch

Chief Technologist



Job Function: I handle or assign JIRA tickets, attend staff/budget meetings, and meet with vendors and contractors most of the day. Once a month, I conduct training classes for staff, judges, or clerks as requested on Microsoft Office, online

research, security, etc.

What is a highlight of your work/project over the past year? Electronic warrant request information sent from law enforcement to judges.

AOC Experience: Seven years, ten months, three days, six hours, ten minutes. (Editor’s note: This was current at the time of publication.)

Favorite Holiday: Easter – I get to hide eggs in the office the next day.

Ann Batchan

Administrative Assistant



Job Function: I supply administrative support to the IT division; set up and coordinate meetings and conferences; maintain an office calendar to coordinate work flow and meetings; prepare responses to correspondence containing routine inquiries;

interact with visitors, clients, and vendors; and perform other duties as assigned by the CIO.

AOC Experience: Twenty-three and a half years and have had the pleasure of working under the leadership of four outstanding directors and two interim directors.

Best Part of Your Job: The AOC is a valuable and necessary agency for the people of the State of Georgia. A friendly greeting and assistance to a frustrated caller who has been transferred ten times and assisting a fellow employee are among the favorite parts of my job.

Fun Fact: I was an African Princess in NY World's fair in 19....

Ayshwarya Sridharan

Application Developer



Job Function: Develop and maintain applications based on requests from Support group.

Most Valuable Job Skill: Multi-tasking and working effectively based on priorities.

Where did you grow up: City called Madras – south of

India.

Favorite Holiday: Diwali (An Asian-Indian culture festival) & Christmas – Lights being the reason for both!

Kriste Pope

Software Support Manager



Job Function: I provide first level support for courts that use software provided by the AOC (SUSTAIN, MCIS, PCIS, TIPS).

Best Part of Your Job? Training: one-on-one and in the classroom)

Favorite Holiday? 4th of July

What is a highlight of your work/project over the past year? Configuration updates to software, report updates, and CS e-filing training (child support office and SUSTAIN courts)

Tim Dalton

System Administrator



Job Function: I am responsible for IT infrastructure (servers, network, storage, backups, antivirus, email, monitoring, etc.)

Most Valuable Job Skill: I would have to split it between two - technology is the most important for the job descrip-

tion, but customer service would be a close second, as an IT professional bridging the gap between technology and people is very valuable.

Favorite Hobby: Playing music. I play guitar, bass and sax.

Favorite Holiday: Halloween, the only holiday when it is ok to scare children who come to your front door. I understand that this is frowned upon on other holidays.

AOC Department Spotlight: IT continued

Michael Neuren

Senior Systems Analyst/Programs Manager



Job Function: I serve as the utility player on the technology staff, handling unusual user issues, network questions, policy and “big picture” systems operations. I research solutions to unique problems. I teach our contractors and other staff the historical and

legal context of our objectives, as well as system requirements and configurations.

What is a highlight of your work/project over the past year? Getting so many more courts involved with the e-filing project, with the hard work of the e-filing team and field staff.

If you could meet one person, who would it be and why? Paul Krugman, New York *Times* columnist and recipient of the Nobel Prize in economics. He seems very good at explaining economic theory.

Who makes up your family? My wife, Linda Klein, former president of the State Bar of Georgia, and me.

Brad Allen

Desktop Support Specialist



Job Function: I spend my day responding to issues with users’ computers and other various IT/AV requests.

What is a highlight of your work/project over the past year? Windows 7 deployment for AOC users.

Where did you grow up? Akron, Ohio

Fun Fact Sometimes it takes me longer to walk to my car than it does to drive home.

Wanda Paul

Software Support Specialist



Job Function: Assisting the Superior, State, Magistrate, Probate, and Municipal Courts with accounting issues, customized reports, training court staff on all of our products; Sustain, MCIS, GAJury, PCIS, TIPS and E-Filing.

Most Valuable Job Skill? Twenty-three years of experience as Deputy Clerk and Chief Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court of Baldwin County. This experience coupled with computer and training skills enable me to be of maximum service to the courts the AOC supports.

Who makes up your family? My husband, Dorman, my daughters, Jennifer Claxton and Jessica Roberts and two beautiful grandchildren, Mary Elizabeth Claxton and Turner Roberts

Favorite Hobby? In the summer, water-skiing and boat riding, fun on the lake. In the winter, snow skiing and watching movies.

Roger Watson

Applications Developer



Job Function: Software development, maintenance and support

Most Valuable Job Skill? Java language programming.

Where did you grow up? Georgetown, Guyana

Favorite Hobby? Running

Sowjanya Aligala

Webmaster



Job Function: My primary function is to design and maintain websites for the councils, commissions, and committees throughout the judiciary by supporting multiple web development projects for client teams and maintaining the SQL database servicing the websites. I am also responsible for maintaining Confluence and JIRA.

I am also responsible for maintaining Confluence and JIRA.

AOC Experience: I have worked at the AOC from past two years and seven months.

Best Part of Your Job? Definitely having to come up with a new design is the best part, because you get the chance to try new things and alternative styles of design.

Who makes up your family? My family consists of five members: my dad, my mom, my two sisters, and me.

Michael Alexandrou

Application Development Manager



Job Function: My primary function is to manage the Child Support E-filing application project.

What is a highlight of your work/project over the past year: The addition of more than twenty courts into the list

of superior courts using our application.

Where did you grow up? Alexandria, Egypt

Who makes up your family? My wife, Viktoria, our son, Nick, and myself.

Kevin Kirk

Business Analyst



Job Function: Varies from training Child Support personnel to creating document packages to helping troubleshoot problems.

AOC Experience: 12 years.

Favorite Hobby?
Photography

If you could meet one person, who would it be and why? With the passing of Steve Jobs I would have to say David Bowie. The man has reinvented himself numerous times successfully.

Richard Denney

Information Systems Analyst



Job Function: Support the Superior Court Judges of the First Judicial Administrative District with all of their technological needs as requested; provide programming support to MCIS, PCIS, and GA Jury; and support the Probate and Magistrate Courts with their

technological and business process needs as requested.

Favorite Hobby? Teaching at the University of Phoenix – Business Information Systems and Introduction to Computer Applications and Systems

Fun Fact: I am a retired First Sergeant from the United States Army and spent my twenty-first birthday patrolling the East/West German border during the Cold War before the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Where did you grow up? Ball Ground in Cherokee County, Georgia

From the Board of Court Reporting

Submitted by Aquaria Smith



Aquaria Smith

Town Hall Meetings

In an effort to engage court reporters, members of the judiciary, court administrators, and the legal community from around the state, the Board of Court Reporting is conducting a series of six state-wide Town Hall meetings on issues facing the court reporting profession. Three of the meetings were held recently: in the Atlanta region on September 10, the Savannah region on October 1, and the Tifton region on November 4. The emerging issues from these meetings included concerns about contracting, gifting and incentives, and electronic reporting. There was discussion about the official fee schedule for court proceedings, billing rates for free-lance court reporting services, and disclosure requirements. The next set of state-wide meetings is scheduled for early 2012.

License Renewals and Annual Registrations

Board staff is preparing for the 2012 annual license renewals for 1,079 court reporters and registrations of 117 court reporting firms. As of November 1, 2011, 34 court reporters are subject to receive a Notice of Revocation for failing to renew their certificate by December 31, 2011.

Additionally, court reporters are required to complete the mandated continuing education (“CE”) requirements by December 31, 2011, to renew their certificate in 2012. Typically, 97% of court reporters meet the mandated training by attending preapproved course offerings from the Institute of Continuing Judicial Education (ICJE).

Upcoming Meetings

The Board of Court Reporting will hold its next quarterly meeting on December 2, 2011, at the Macon Chamber of Commerce, where staff is preparing the agenda to include an Open Session for representative from the state associations, Georgia Certified Court Reporters Association (GCCRA) and Georgia Shorthand Reporters Association (GSRA) to share their concerns from members and the court reporting community, and the administration of a public reprimand to (2) two certified court reporters.

Staff is working with the Court Reporters’ Training Council (CRTC) on curriculum development of technology courses to include skills enhancement and real-time reporting and to enhance offerings on professionalism and ethics. The CRTC is scheduled to meet on March 16, 2012, in Atlanta.

BCR TOWN HALL MEETING



Aquaria Smith (standing) greets those in attendance at the Savannah Town Hall meeting on October 1, 2011.

Quality Improvement Child Representation Project

The Supreme Court of Georgia's Committee on Justice for Children, staffed through the Administrative Office of the Courts, has partnered with child welfare leaders across the state to engage in the Quality Improvement Child Representation Project. This study, sponsored by the University of Michigan Law School through the U.S. Children's Bureau, seeks to gather empirically-based data on legal representation of children in abused and neglected cases. Georgia was chosen, along with Washington State, to serve as a Research and Demonstration site after a competitive selection process. The study will be facilitated through the Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children, the Barton Child Law and Policy Center at Emory University School of Law, and the Georgia Association of Counsel for Children.

The Quality Improvement Child Representation Project, also known as *QIC-ChildRep*, is a five-year, \$5 million project to gather, develop, and communicate knowledge on child representation. *QIC-ChildRep* began in 2009 when the U.S. Children's Bureau named the University of Michigan Law School the National Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in the Child Welfare System. The University of Michigan's partner is Chapin Hall, a child welfare policy research center, at the University of Chicago. Chapin Hall will conduct the evaluation of the research and demonstration sites.

In its first year, *QIC-ChildRep* gathered information on child representation nationally. The project reviewed Court Improvement Program (CIP) Reassessments, CFSR Statewide Assessments, and First Star Reports. The project also reviewed state statutes, court rules, academic literature, and conducted stakeholder interviews as a part of its assessment. The project utilized this information to develop a Best Practice Model of Children Representation

("Model"). This Model is largely based on the 1996 ABA Standards of Practice for Lawyers Who Represent Children in Abuse and Neglect Cases with child engagement components.

In 2010, *QIC-ChildRep* sought proposals from entities willing to implement the Model to measure its effectiveness. With the support of judges and juvenile court stakeholders from across the state, Georgia was awarded the grant in 2011.

As a *QIC-ChildRep* Research and Demonstration site, Georgia has an opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base for 'what works' to improve the lives of abused and neglected children. The Georgia team is now working to gather information on attorneys in the participating jurisdictions, and training those attorneys on CPRS — the web-

based system used for data collection. Sixteen juvenile courts have agreed to participate in the study. Half of the attorneys participating will receive training in the Best Practice Model in the early months of 2012. The other half will remain in a control group and will be asked to submit data without any QIC-specific training. The project will run for four years.

Ms. Araceli Jacobs, a recent graduate of American University Washington College of Law, is the project coordinator for this project. While in law school, she interned for Judge Gregory Jackson in the District of Columbia Superior Court, the American Bar Association Criminal Justice Division, and the Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect. Araceli also worked in the General Practice Clinic as a student attorney and for the Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project. In 2011, she received the Peter M. Cicchino Public Service Honors certificate for her pro bono work in juvenile law. Prior to law school, Araceli was a special education teacher in South Florida as a part of the Teach for America program. Araceli enjoys working in all aspects of child law, including education law.

For more information contact Ms. Jacobs at araceli.jacobs@gaaoc.us



Araceli Jacobs staffs *QIC-ChildRep*

Staff Notes

Director's Division

Mike Cuccaro has been named **Assistant Director of Governmental and Trial Court Liaison**. His duties include directing a diverse range of support, operational, and programmatic activities for the agency: including liaisoning with governmental entities, monitoring General Assembly activities, coordinating Judicial Branch responses to legislative proposals; acting as liaison with trial court councils and judges' monitoring activities, providing secretariat support to councils and committees; and coordinating judicial branch Information Technology plan in conjunction with AOC Chief Information Technology Officer and special projects for the Director of the AOC.



Mike Cuccaro

Mike has been with the AOC since July 2010. He previously worked with the Georgia Technology Authority and the Council of Superior Court Judges.

Employees Participate in Agency-wide Work Study

AOC staff recently participated in a Work Study at the behest of the Communications Section to assess the primary needs of the organization's stakeholders. Employees were asked to record work interactions on a daily basis for two weeks from October 24 - November 4. Each interaction — whether by phone, fax, e-mail, or face-to-face communication — was recorded along with whom the interaction took place including other AOC employees, judges, court personnel, other state agencies, general public, etc. This data will be combined with questionnaires completed by key staff members to create a marketing/communications plan for the agency which will include a website re-design. If you have ideas about how we can improve our communications with you, please email publications@gaaoc.us

Mark Williams began as Policy Fiscal Analyst on September 16, 2011. Previous to his employment with the AOC, Mark worked as a consultant for the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council, Office of Planning and Budget, Department of Audits, and the Department of Defense. He takes over the duties held by **Kelly Steele**.

Court Services Division

Edwin Bell, Program Development Manager, left the AOC on September 30, 2011 to become Juvenile Court Clerk of Fulton County. Mr. Bell worked at the AOC for six years.

Justin Brady, AOC Research Associate, left on September 30, 2011, to pursue a career in Human Resources.

Debra Oliver, Administrative Assistant, left the AOC on October 15 to work for MARTA.

The Research Section welcomes **Josh Becker** who will begin as a Research Associate on November 16, 2011.

Wall of Directors



A new feature in the office is the addition of portraits of the previous AOC Directors and group shots of the current Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. The pictures are located near the front desk of the AOC office.

Legislative Gear-up

Submitted by Christopher Causey



Christopher Causey

The AOC's Governmental Affairs Division has recently been renamed to the Government and Judicial/Trial Court Liaison. Under the supervision of the Director, our role encompasses staff level interaction with the Governor's Office, day-to-day liaison to members

and staff of the General Assembly, and management of relationships with the classes of trial courts, the State Bar, and other agencies and officials of the trial courts.

Throughout the summer we have been preparing for the 2012 Legislative Session. With several seats being vacated in the General Assembly over the past few months, we will be monitoring the November and December special elections very closely. Vacant seats include House Districts 10, 25, and 68. The special election runoff to fill House District 43, formerly held by the late Bobby Franklin (R-Cobb), was won by political newcomer John Carson. Open Senate seats to be filled during the November special election include Senate Districts 28 and 50, formerly held by Sen. Mitch Seabaugh (R-Sharpsburg) and Sen. Jim Butterworth (R-Cornelia) respectively.

Also, over the summer the Special Council on

Criminal Justice Reform for Georgians met monthly to establish recommendations and findings intended to develop legislation for the 2012 General Assembly. The ultimate goals of these findings should advance state policies, practices and programs that reduce growth of the state's prison population and contain corrections costs. In addition, the Council aims to improve public safety by reinvesting a portion of the savings in strategies that reduce crime and recidivism. Lastly, the recommendations and finding should hold offenders accountably by strengthening community-based supervision, sanctions and services. These finding and recommendations are to be published early November.

Other legislation we look to track closely during the upcoming session includes: **HB 155** – Increased protections afforded accused, **HB 272** - Juvenile court; rehearing an order of associate juvenile court judge and **SB 236** - Driver's Licenses; persons convicted under the influence; allow certain drivers with suspended licenses; limited driving permits. These bills were introduced during the 2011 Legislative Session.

In December, we will be rolling out a new legislative website for use during the session. Simply visit www.georgiacourts.gov and click on "Legislative Session"



Golfing for a Good Cause

On September 28, 2011 AOC staffers **Andrew Theus** (far left with Marine honor guard), Facilities Operations and Planning Specialist, and **Randy Dennis**, Financial Administration Division Director, competed in the MajGen Warren R. Johnson Memorial Fund Raiser Golf Tournament to raise money for wounded soldiers and their families.